

Protecting City Parkway Trees During Private Property Construction

In addition to their numerous environmental benefits, trees in the parkway areas along the streets of Costa Mesa are a tremendous asset to residential and commercial communities. Parkway trees are protected by City of Costa Mesa Municipal Code Sec. 15-132 as follows: “No person shall begin any construction or excavation without first providing sufficient protection for trees on public property, such as a fence, guard or frame within a five-foot minimum distance of the tree trunk. This five-foot minimum may be extended at the sole discretion of the director of public services for other unforeseen horticultural circumstances”. Municipal Code Sec. 15-126 as follows: No person shall install, replace, or alter any tree located within city medians, parkways or tree easements, without first obtaining a permit”.

The maintenance and protection of street trees is a shared responsibility between property owners and the City. Municipal Code Sec. 15-140.1 as follows: “No person shall maintain, remove, plant, abuse, mutilate, damage, cut, carve, transplant, attach any rope, wire, nails, or affix any advertising posters or any other sign, allow any harmful chemical or substance to come in contact with, or set fire or permit any fire or heat source to injure any portion of any tree in the City right-of-way and other public places”. Municipal Code Sec. 15-140.3 as follows: “It shall be the duty of all adjacent property owners and their tenants to water their tree(s) planted in the public right-of-way immediately in front or abutting the property line of their property”.

If you feel that a street tree is unhealthy, damaged or in need of pruning, please contact the **Maintenance Services Division at (714) 754-5123**.

Construction activities can have severe and long lasting effects on the health of trees. Consideration must be given to street trees during a project’s planning stages. Tree loss or damage can have a significant effect on the uniformity and value of a tree canopy along a street. The planning and implementation of any construction project must include the preservation of this important City asset. Planning and protecting the health of trees during construction is part of doing business in the City of Costa Mesa.

This information is provided to assist you to avoid endangering City trees during your construction project.

PROJECT PLANNING

- During the design process, please consider the long term effects that construction may have on City trees. Plan activities carefully, as the City of Costa Mesa will seek compensation for any damage to the trees caused by your construction activities.
- For any projects that include construction work in the public right-of-way, plans that accurately depict the public right-of-way will need the approval of the Planning Department prior to any permits being issued by the Department of Building and Safety.
- All preliminary plans, sketches and drawings should identify all City parkway trees adjacent to the project site. The actual location and canopy diameter of City trees must be shown clearly on the plans.
- A City tree protection plan must be included in the initial plan submittal package. The tree protection plan may include a fenced tree protection zone, and must demonstrate how the parkway will be watered and maintained for the duration of the project. If it is determined that the proposed work will jeopardize the health of a street tree, or if the tree protection plan is deemed inadequate, you may be asked to provide a detailed report by a certified arborist

showing the adequate protection of the tree and its value based on the International Society of Arboriculture (ISA) recognized standards.

- The negative effects of construction may take years to become apparent in the decline of trees. A claim may be filed with you and your general liability carrier should damage become apparent at a later date.
- You may wish to retain an International Society of Arboriculture (ISA) Certified Arborist to assist you with your project. Contact information is provided below.

PROJECT APPROVAL

- All construction related permits will be processed by the Department of Building and Safety. Permits for trucking, hauling and work conducted in the public right-of-way are required by the Public Services Department.
- The tree protection plan must be approved by the Maintenance Services Division, Parks and Parkways Section. If a tree protection zone fence is required, it must be installed and inspected prior to the commencement of any demolition or construction work. These inspections can be arranged by calling (714) 754-5123.

SPECIFICATIONS

- A protection zone may require that the entire parkway be fenced. Fencing may be of a flexible configuration, but may not exceed 4 feet in height. Fence installation should be such that lines of sight are maintained so as to avoid any vehicle or pedestrian hazards. A warning sign must be displayed on the street side of the fence. The size of the sign must be no less than 8.5 x 11 inches. The sign must clearly state "Warning: Tree Protection Zone". The sign shall clearly list the name and current contact information of the project owner or authorized representative.

DURING THE PROJECT

- Maintain the integrity of the tree protection zone fencing and keep the parkway site clean and maintained at all times.
- The site will be inspected the Building and Safety Department and the Maintenance Services Division of the Public Services Department. If the tree protection plan is not complied with, or proves inadequate, additional measures may be required.
- It is recommended that trees be deep watered on a weekly basis for the duration of the project.

CONTACT/RESOURCE INFORMATION

City of Costa Mesa contact information

- Public Services Department, Maintenance Services Division, Parks and Parkways Section: (714) 754-5123.
- Public Services Department, Engineering Division: (714) 754-5323
- Building and Safety Department – Permit Desk (714) 754-5273

Determining the value of trees

- Council of Tree and Landscape Appraisers (CTLA), 2000. Guide for Plant Appraisal, 9th Edition. Savoy, IL: ISA, 143pp. Order this free reference guide online at: <http://www.wcisa.net/pbitem.asp?PubID=30>

Find an International Society of Arboriculture (ISA) Certified Arborist

- Western Chapter ISA: (530) 892-1006

- ISA, find an Arborist by phone (217) 355-9411
- ISA, find an Arborist online: <http://www.isa-arbor.com/arborists/arbsearch.html>